



Corncrakes

Not one among the rushes
 None in the meadows
 None where the farmer dropped to his knees
 Lamenting the crumpled nest its requiem
 wringing his hands
 like a chaplain
 bringing bad news
 to the door
 in the night time
Them's rare wee things – them's rare!
 ... and rarer still
 the small clutch
 a universe among the rushes
 Small planets grounded in troubled heavens.
 These scaplings scurry in frantic sorties
 To grub in the undergrowth
 amongst the brackens.
 It is the night, it is the stars impress
 Africa, Africa, Africa
 Opening the night
 terra incognita –
 There is no way
 only opening the night

Listen, first intently;
 closely – no further than at arms length
 and then, when everything is detailed,
 clocked & inventoried & only then,
 double the circle
 Listen, double the circle, Listen
 sense unreachable places,
 calm places at the eye

of hurricanes.
Flee your fever
and with unholy impetus
hurl
Into the nomadic sky,
into severe places
into unspeakable theatres of ablation,
Into mystery, uncertainty, doubt,
and tell everything
when
you
return.

[Maria McManus](#)